

ON THE IDENTITY OF CONUS CROTCHII REEVE, 1849

by

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INTRODUCTION.

Due to collecting activities for Cones on the Cape Verde Islands in the last ten years, great confusion was created on the taxonomy and nomenclature of this family.

Burnay & Monteiro (1977) were the first authors who showed the rich variability in Conidae from that area. In 1979 Trovao described new species, soon followed by Röckel, Von Cosel & Burnay (1980), Rolan (1980), Röckel, Rolan & Monteiro (1980), Rolan & al. (1983a,b) and Elsen (1983).

Mainly based on different colour patterns, many new taxa were described. However a serious study of the types of West African cones as described by Reeve (1843-1849), Sowerby II (1832-1841, 1857-1866), Sowerby III (1887) and Kiener (1845-1850) failed and errors or misinterpretations were copied from each other.

Main purpose of this article is to correct one of these errors, viz. the description of *Conus poppei* Elsen, 1983 (fig.1). This species was compared to *C. chytreus* Melvill in Tryon, 1883 from Angola and two taxa from the Cape Verde Islands viz. *C. irregularis* Sowerby, 1857 and *C. crotchii* Reeve, 1849.

We are of the opinion that it differs from the first two taxa but its relation to the third will be discussed below.

Conus crotchii Reeve, 1849, Conch. Icon.1, suppl. Conus : pl. 6, spec. (25 304).

Type : Reeve described this taxon from a specimen in the Cuming collection. The size of the type figure is 28,5 x 16,5 mm. In the original description nothing indicates that Reeve possessed more than the one he figured. Therefore that specimen is the holotype (fig. 4).

Type locality : "Saldanha Bay, South Africa", which is erroneous.

Remarks : In the type collection of the British Museum of Natural History (BMNH) in London are three specimens labelled "probable syntypes" of *C. crotchii* (fig.3), n° 196174. The measurements are 30,1 x 19,0; 26,0 x 17,1 and 23,9 x 14,8 mm. The status of type(s) was accepted by Kohn (unpublished type list BMNH, 1959), Röckel et al.(1980) and Elsen (1983). After studying the type collection in BMNH and a research for a revision of the family Conidae (Coomans et al., 1984 in press) we came to the conclusion that the three supposed "syntypes" do not agree in size, colour and pattern with the original figure of the type. Therefore they cannot be considered syntypes. Also the general collection of BMNH does not contain a specimen, which agrees with the type figure.

The collection of the Zoological Museum Amsterdam contains a specimen (fig.5), which looks very close to the figured holotype in Reeve; it is somewhat smaller than the type figure (21,8 x 14,2 mm) and also the colour pattern is a little bit different. This specimen was acquired from the collection H.C. Roeters van Lennep in 1876, with the locality "Kaap de Goede Hoop", (Cape, South Africa).

We have to conclude that the whereabouts of the holotype is unknown.

Elsen (1983) described *C. poppei* from the Cape Verde Islands, Boavista, Santa Monica and figured the variability in pattern of live collected specimens (fig.2). We have no doubts that the holotype of *C. poppei* (fig.1) agrees perfectly with the type figure of *C. crotchii* Reeve (fig.4). Only the latter was a faded specimen which can be seen from the lighter brown spiral thread-like lines.

Probably *C. crotchii* was first figured by Sowerby II (1834) figure 84 as *C. venulatus* Lamarck var. It was figured by Rolan et al. (1983b), figure F 5 as *C. cuneolus* from the Cape Verde Islands, Maio, which locality is doubted by us.

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EXPLANATION FIGURES.

Fig. 1. holotype of *Conus poppei* Elsen.

Fig. 2. variability in pattern of *C. crotchii* Reeve

Fig. 3. supposed syntypes of *C. crotchii* Reeve in BMNH

Fig. 4. figure of holotype (after Reeve, 1849) *Conus crotchii* Reeve

Fig. 5. *C. crotchii* Reeve in collection Zoological Museum Amsterdam.



